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Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
Second session
New York, 12-23 May 2003
Item 3 of the provisional agenda*
Theme of the session: "Indigenous children and youth"

High-level panel and dialogue on indigenous children and youth

Note by the Secretariat

Background

1. At its first session, the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues expressed its attention to make indigenous children and youth a focal point of its work in the years to come. The Forum addressed various recommendations to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and to the Committee on the Rights of the Child and other monitoring bodies.[1]

2. Important policy initiatives and events focusing on the indigenous child are being planned for 2003. A day of general discussion is being planned by the Committee on the Rights of the Child on 19 September 2003. UNICEF is currently preparing a digest on the indigenous child, scheduled to be published in the latter part of 2003. UNICEF is also preparing a number of case studies aimed at understanding development programming to fulfil the rights of indigenous children. At the regional level, at the Ibero-American summit to be held in fall 2003, special focus will be placed on the indigenous child.

Objective

3. The Forum will convene a high-level panel and dialogue on indigenous children and youth on 12 May 2003 to stimulate further discussion and analysis within the Forum, the United Nations system, Governments, indigenous people's organizations, non-governmental organizations and others. The discussion is also expected to inform the consideration of the other agenda items of the second session of the Forum so that recommendations can be formulated taking into account the human rights and needs of indigenous children and youth.

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Format

4. The composition of the panel will include Nina Pacari Vega, Foreign Minister of Ecuador, UNICEF, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, an indigenous youth and Ida Nicolaisen, Member of the Forum with portfolio for children and youth. The panel will be chaired by the Chairperson of the Forum. Representation of United Nations Member States at the level of permanent representatives will be encouraged. After the introductory statements of the panellists, a dialogue will take place with Forum members as well as observers representing United Nations Member States, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, indigenous peoples' organizations and non-governmental organizations. A Chairman's summary of the panel will be prepared and submitted to the Forum and observers.

Substantive framework of the panel and dialogue

5. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, ILO Convention No. 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries and ILO Convention No. 182 concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, as well as other relevant instruments, constitute the normative foundation on which policies and programmes on indigenous children and youth should be based. Moreover, important global conferences and their follow-up (World Summit for Children, Millennium Summit, World Summit on Sustainable Development and others) provide an additional policy framework. The panel will address the following main questions:

- What are the main challenges faced by indigenous children today (for example, issues of discrimination, poverty, environmental hazards, child labour, health care, education, cultural rights, substance abuse, forced removals)?
- What are some good examples of approaches to solutions at the national/local levels, as well as at the regional/subregional and international levels?
- How should the rights of indigenous children and youth be better promoted and protected? How should development programmes for indigenous children and youth be enhanced at the international and national levels? What types of action are needed in legislation, policies and budgets? What positive role can the media play in that direction? How can the Forum, United Nations mechanisms, the United Nations system and other intergovernmental, indigenous peoples' and non-governmental organizations strengthen their contribution to the improvement of the lives of indigenous children and youth?

Notes

[1] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2002, Supplement No. 23* (E/2003/43/Rev.1 and Rev.1/Corr.1), chap. I, sect. B, para. 31.

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Mandated areas

Information received from Governments

Russian Federation

Problems relating to the socio-economic development and culture of small indigenous minorities have since 1991 been addressed through special federal programmes designed to facilitate the achievement by indigenous peoples of sustainable development, based on the principles of self-sufficiency through comprehensive development of traditional economic practices. Priorities include improvement of indigenous peoples' resource and production base, spiritual and ethnocultural development, and health.

The foundations of State policy for the socio-economic development of indigenous peoples are as follows:

- Laws and regulations adopted over the past several years;
- The Russian Federation's medium-term programme for socio-economic development, as approved in a government directive of July 2001;
- The plan of action to implement the Russian Federation's concept of State support for the economic and social development of districts of the North under new economic circumstances, as approved in a government decision of March 2001;
- The special federal programme "Children of the North", within the framework of the presidential programme "Children of Russia".

The related special laws and statutory instruments of the Russian Federation establish the particular rights of small indigenous minorities to their own socio-economic and cultural development and to conservation of their indigenous habitat, traditional way of life and management of natural resources. They include the following federal acts: Rights of Small Indigenous Minorities of the Russian

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Federation (Guarantees), of 16 April 1999; Communities of Small Indigenous Minorities of the North, Siberia and the Russian Far East (General Organizational Principles), of 6 July 2000; and Territories of Traditional Natural Resource Use (Small Indigenous Minorities of the North, Siberia and the Russian Far East), of 4 April 2001.

In addition, a number of federal sectoral acts concerning natural resource use and State regulation of the North's socio-economic development also set out principles to protect the rights of indigenous peoples. These include the following federal acts: Animal World, of 24 April 1995; Specially Protected Natural Areas, of 14 March 1995; Protection of the Environment, of 10 January 2002; Mineral Resources, of 21 February 1992; and Payments for Land, of 11 October 1991.

Action is being taken, under the concept of State support for the economic and social development of districts of the North under new economic circumstances, to implement the special federal programme "Economic and Social Development of Small Indigenous Minorities of the North up to the year 2011". This action includes:

- Creating, through district hospitals and clinics, a network of stations for remote medicine to facilitate consultations with clinical centres in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Krasnoyarsk, etc. (29 entities of the Russian Federation in all), and dispatching integrated medical teams from the country's central medical facilities to examine children in the remote northern territories;
- Introducing new educational technologies for the teaching of children in the northern territories: delivery of equipment for computer classes; creation of new educational software; publication of teaching aids and literature in indigenous languages;
- Supporting the children of the North's artistic activity and the traditional artistic pursuits of indigenous peoples;
- Organizing competitions in local sports and supporting children's and adolescents' sports schools, associations, sections and their acquisition of sports appliances.

The education of children from the small indigenous minorities is a recognized element of the Russian education system. The fundamental principles are as follows: the right to be taught in one's native language; application of the State's educational standards; and application of the general requirements for various levels of educational programmes with due regard for the national-territorial structure of the Russian Federation, which is home to various peoples, ethnic and linguistic groups and presents regional and local peculiarities.

According to information from Russia's State Statistical Committee for 2002, there were some 6,000 pre-school facilities in the Far North and associated areas, servicing more than 542,000 children.

There are currently 664 general schools in the North, Siberia and the Far East which offer teaching in 23 languages of the North's small indigenous minorities to more than 100,000 children. Thus, for example, the Dolgan language is being learned by 1,011 children at 3 schools; Itelmen by 88 children at 2 schools; Ket by 117 children at 9 schools; Koryak by 710 children at 21 schools; and Mansi by 1,057 children at 12 schools.

The network of elementary vocational training institutions in the Russian Federation's northern territories has enough places to meet the requirements of students from the small indigenous minorities of the North, Siberia and the Far East.

The northern territories' annual projected quotas for training of qualified workers and specialists in elementary vocational training institutions provide for an intake of members of the small indigenous minorities at such institutions.

The list of skills for which elementary vocational training is provided, as confirmed in a decision of the Government of the Russian Federation dated 8 December 1999, includes 292 items, of which 34 are taught at elementary vocational training institutions to members of the small minorities of the North, Siberia and the Far East.

The biggest demand among the small minorities of the North, Siberia and the Far East is for training in skills linked to traditional artistic pursuits, as well as reindeer-breeding, hunting and fishing.

With a view to training teachers for ethnic schools, the Russian Ministry of Education in 1998 introduced the subject "Native language and literature" into the classified list of specializations for intermediate vocational training. Those specializing in this subject become qualified as "teachers of native language and literature at a basic general school". Graduates learn about the system and levels of the native language, its cognates and typological relationships with other languages, history, current status and evolutionary trends, as well as about native literature and folklore, native children's literature, cultural history of the indigenous people and literature of related peoples.

The specialization "Fine arts and drawing" now includes an additional training component on the technology of folk-art painting. Graduates qualify as teachers of fine arts and drawing with additional training in the technology of folk-art painting.

The curriculum for the specialization "Teaching in elementary classes" now includes such subjects as "Ethnography", "Ethno-choreography" and "Lessons from our ancestors".

The Palan Teacher Training College was established in 1990 in the Koryak Autonomous Area. Of its 132 students, 90 per cent are members of the indigenous peoples of the North and are fully supported by the State. Training is provided in three specializations: "Teaching in elementary classes"; "Pre-school education"; and "Extra-curricular teaching". An ethno-regional component has been introduced into the curriculum, with subjects such as ethnic applied arts (work with fur and beads), ethno-choreography, local history, native languages (Koryak, Even and Itelmen), and the culture and way of life of the peoples of the North.

The curriculum for all specializations includes the subject "Fine and decorative-applied arts of the peoples of the North" as an option.

The Russian Ministry of Education is presently conducting work on ensuring access for young people to advanced vocational training. The problem is being addressed both by setting up universities in the republics and by opening branches of colleges where populations are compact.

The Yugor State University was set up in Khanty-Mansiisk in 2001. More than 70 branches of the country's higher education institutions have now been opened,

including branches of colleges in Moscow, St. Petersburg and Novosibirsk. 11 have been opened in the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area alone; 17 in the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Area; 11 in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia); 8 in the Komi Republic; 4 in the Chukchi Autonomous Area; and 2 in the Agin-Buryat Autonomous Area.

Furthermore, to assist with the training of members of the small indigenous minorities of the North, the Russian Ministry of Education provides support to the administrations of corresponding entities of the Russian Federation which request help in the assignment of places at colleges within the quotas financed by the federal budget. For example, in 2002 the Ministry supported requests from the Sakha Republic (Yakutia) to assign 1,017 places, and from the Tyva Republic for a further 460 places.

The small indigenous minorities of the North are given priority entry to the State Polar Academy in St. Petersburg. The number of students from the small minorities of the North (784 as of 1 January 2002, with plans to admit 200 for the academic year 2002-2003), together with payments for subsistence, study materials, summer vacation travel and placement on graduation are determined by the Ministry on the basis of applications from the State Polar Academy, which are granted in full.

Under the Russian Constitution and acts on Education and Rights of Small Indigenous Minorities of the Russian Federation, the publication of books in various languages for schools where members of the small indigenous minorities of the North, Siberia and the Far East are taught is financed by the Ministry of Education from the federal budget.

Textbooks are published not only in different languages but also in different dialects. For example, there are textbooks in four dialects of the Khanty language: Kazym, Shuryshkar, Surgut and Vakh; and in two dialects of the Nivkh and Nenets languages.

Under the programme "Children of the North", the Institute of National Education Problems in 2001-2002 produced course programmes, teaching aids and dictionaries in the Evenk, Nivkh and Nanai languages for those studying at elementary schools in areas populated by the small indigenous minorities of the North; and, for classes 5 to 9 at Koryak, Yukagir, Dolgan and Nivkh schools and classes 10 to 11 at Nanai, Chukchi and Eskimo schools, bilingual dictionaries and teaching aids on traditional trades, pursuits and other forms of economic activity of the peoples of the North.

In 2002, the Russian Ministry of Education concluded contracts amounting to 13,700,000 Russian roubles for the publication of textbooks for the small indigenous minorities of the North, Siberia and the Far East.

A legislative basis for culture which recognizes the cultural peculiarities of the small indigenous minorities of the Far North and associated areas of the Russian Federation has now been established countrywide. Under the country's Constitution, culture and protection of the rights of ethnic minorities are the joint responsibility of the Federation and its constituent entities. Federal acts, including those on the Foundations of Russian Federation Legislation on Culture, of 9 October 1992, National-Cultural Autonomy, of 17 June 1996, and the Rights of Small Indigenous Minorities of the Russian Federation, of 30 April 1999, set out the legal foundations of State policy in support of the cultural heritage of the peoples of the Far North.

State social policy, including policy on culture in areas of the Far North, is implemented by the executive authorities of the Russian Federation with the assistance of various instruments, including special federal programmes. Thus, under the special federal programme "Culture of Russia (2001-2005)", the Russian Ministry of Culture must provide for partial funding of the projects to protect and promote the cultures of peoples and ethnic groups living in the Russian Federation, including the Far North.

In view of the specifics of the Far North, support is also provided to non-federal activities. In 2002, for example, these included the traditional "Ysyakh" rite-festival of the Yakut people, folklore-ethnographic expeditions to the *ulusy* of Yakutia, support for the activities of the "Imlya" national Eskimo assembly (Chukotka), equipping a studio to produce Khanty-Mansi traditional musical instruments, etc.

Quotas have been established for the members of certain small indigenous minorities living in the Far North to attend colleges of culture and art.

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Information received from Governments**

Sweden

1. The Permanent Mission of Sweden to the United Nations, in reference to the note of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, relating to the recommendations and priorities set out in the report of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues on its first session, has the honour to submit the comments set out below.

2. The number of Saami in Sweden amounts to approximately 20,000. The majority live in the northern part of Sweden. Some 3,000 Saamis live in Stockholm. Over the last few years, a closer dialogue between the Swedish Government and Saami representatives has resulted in a stronger sense of partnership between the Government and Saami representatives as regards issues of concern to the Saami population. That process may be seen as a follow-up to the apology made by the Swedish Government to the Saamis for former injustices, which was made on the International Day of Indigenous Peoples, on 9 August 1998.

> "The Forum calls upon States to adopt the draft United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples before the end of the decade."[1]

3. Sweden fully supports the priority attached by the Forum to the adoption of the draft United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples before the end of the Decade of the World's Indigenous People in 2004. With that goal in mind, Sweden will continue to participate actively in the work of the working group preparing the Declaration.

* E/C.19/2003/1.
** Submitted late to ensure the inclusion of the most recent information.

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> "The Forum encourages States to include representatives of indigenous peoples' organizations in their delegations to the informal intersessional meeting on the draft United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples."[2]

4. Sweden has promoted and supported a high level of transparency in the process of elaborating the draft declaration, with the inclusion of all parties concerned. Greater transparency is particularly important in order to reach an agreement on a draft text in the final stages of the process towards the adoption of the draft declaration.

5. Sweden strives to involve and inform the Saami Parliament and other Saami representatives about parts of the proceedings which are open to Governments only. Together with the other Nordic Governments, Sweden participates in informal consultations on the proceedings on the working group involving representatives of the Saami Parliament.

6. The President of the Swedish Saami Assembly was part of the Swedish delegation to the December 2002 session of the working group.

> "The Forum encourages States to undertake consultations with indigenous peoples to elaborate constitutional provisions and State policies relating to indigenous issues."[3]

7. Autonomy granted to the Saami people is very much related to the Saami Parliament. In 1992, the Swedish Parliament passed a law to set up an elected body with the primary task of nurturing a living Saami culture in Sweden. The governing body is an assembly with 31 members, all elected every fourth year among the Saami population. In addition to the main task of fostering Saami culture, it has been assigned other specific functions, inter alia, to decide on the distribution of funds allocated by the Government to promote Saami culture and to support Saami organizations. It also allocates other funds placed at the disposal of the Saami community for joint utilization and appoints the board of the Saami school. The Saami Parliament also directs efforts to promote the Saami language and participate in public planning to ensure that Saami needs are taken into consideration in the utilization of land and water resources. The Parliament is also responsible for information about Saami affairs.

8. According to the concept of autonomy, the Saami Parliament decides on the distribution of money set aside for Saami purposes in the national budget. In 2003, that appropriation amounts to 8,000,000 euros.

9. Some Swedish public authorities have a legal duty to consult the Saami Parliament on matters that affect the Saami, such as the utilization of land and water in the reindeer breeding area, mining claims, and language and education.

10. The Government has also set up a delegation on indigenous peoples, whose main objectives are:

(a) To deal with and follow up General Assembly decisions and to initiate, plan and carry out various measures, for example in the form of exhibitions, seminars and other similar arrangements to promote the aims of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People;

(b) To follow up United Nations objectives for the Decade that are relevant to the Swedish situation;

(c) To contribute towards increased Saami autonomy and Saami participation in political life;

(d) To promote Saami culture and traditional Saami economic activities and ensure that support for the Saami people has a coherent political approach;

(e) To contribute to greater public awareness of the Saami cultural heritage;

(f) To work for increased cooperation on Saami political issues in Scandinavia and the Saami area.

11. A majority of the members in the delegation are of Saami origin.

> "The Forum requests that Governments include in their programmes and plans and in their educational and cultural policies the contents of the indigenous knowledge, indigenous spiritual and religious traditions, indigenous customs and ceremonies, as well as indigenous histories, visions of the cosmos, philosophies and values. The rights of the indigenous peoples to their sacred sites and ceremonial objects and to the distribution of their ancestral remains should be respected. They wish to have their cultural properties returned to them, particularly if those properties were taken without their permission, as well as restoration and protection of their environment, lands and resources. The cultural heritage made up of the archaeological zones and sacred sites that are used for tourism, should be taught to non-indigenous children and young people so that they know the contribution of indigenous culture to all societies and to this globalized world."[4]

12. The Government has embarked on an information campaign on the Saami people aimed at the entire Swedish population. Opinion surveys show that there is a need for more information on the Saami and their culture and rights. The currently insufficient awareness of the situation of the Saami among the general public has led to a proliferation of myths, prejudices and stereotypes. The public debate on Saami issues has thus far been one-sided, with a clear focus on territorial disputes, reindeer breeding rights and spectacular events. The aim of the information campaign is to rectify that situation. The campaign is scheduled for a period of five years and will cost a total of 2,000,000 euros. It will target public authorities, non-governmental organizations, schools, the media and the general public.

13. Saami children can receive Saami pre-school, elementary and secondary school education in the northern provinces. Today, there are six Saami elementary schools where children can study the subjects offered in the provincial elementary schools, as well as receive education in the Saami language and culture. Those schools receive state subsidies amounting to 3,000,000 euros. In some of the schools in the northern region, the teaching of the Saami language and culture is integrated into the curriculum of the provincial schools.

14. At the University in Umeå, there is a special department for Saami studies. The University also organizes courses with Saami subjects throughout the northern area.

15. The issue of accession to the ILO Convention No. 169 is still being prepared. The report of the inquiry submitted in 1999 indicated that Swedish legislation on property rights needs to be strengthened in order to make accession possible.

16. In relation to the above-mentioned report, the Reindeer Breeding Policy Commission has recommended reinforcements in reindeer breeding legislation and establishing a new relationship between competing industries in northern Sweden, forestry, agriculture and reindeer breeding. Those recommendations have been submitted to parties concerned for comments and are now being prepared within the Ministry of Agriculture.

17. A boundary commission was appointed in 2002. The commission will define the boundaries for the Saami reindeer breeding area, giving the priority to the extent of the area to be used for winter pasture. The commission plans to submit its findings in December 2004.

18. The scope of the Saami hunting and fishing rights on the land which they traditionally occupy will be further clarified by a commission.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2002, Supplement No. 23* (E/2002/43/Rev.1 and Rev.1/Corr.1), chap. I, sect. B, para. 18.

[2] Ibid., para. 19.

[3] Ibid., para. 23.

[4] Ibid., para. 27 (c).

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Information received from the United Nations system

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations**

I. Background and general context

1. Since 1945, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has worked to alleviate poverty and hunger by:

- Promoting agricultural development.
- Improved nutrition.
- The pursuit of food security.

2. Rural populations and vulnerable groups are the target people for FAO work, and indigenous peoples are among the most vulnerable groups in the world in terms of food and livelihood security.

3. FAO works with indigenous peoples and their organizations in many of its regular programme activities. Indigenous issues are an integral part of the work of numerous organizational units, including those working in household food security and nutrition, fisheries, forestry, land, water, plant production, management and protection, livestock, agricultural support systems, legal advice (on normative frameworks for access to and use of natural resources), and units dealing with participation, rural institutions and land tenure.

4. The programmes and activities involving indigenous peoples (including traditional communities) include:

- Indigenous land husbandry.

* E/C.19/2003/1.
** Submitted late to allow for comprehensive input from indigenous focal points within FAO.

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- Biodiversity, including global programmes on plant and animal genetic resources for food and agriculture.
- Farmer field schools.
- Farmers' rights.
- Nutrition and household food security.
- Food insecurity and vulnerability profiling and mapping.
- Sustainable forest management.
- Development law.
- Land tenure.
- Rural institutions and participation.
- Gender, population and indigenous knowledge.
- Research, extension and training.
- Measurement tools on sustainable agriculture and rural development practices in the interest of indigenous peoples.

II. Current activities contributing to the PFII's recommendations and priorities

A. Some FAO programmes and activities involving indigenous peoples

1. Standard-setting: development of international treaties and codes of conduct

5. Under the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, several treaties have been negotiated and adopted involving indigenous communities and groups, including:

- International Treaty on Plant Genetic resources for Food and Agriculture, specifically regarding Farmers' rights, including indigenous peoples.
- International Code of Conduct for Plant Germplasm Collecting and Transfer, including traditional indigenous plants.

2. Technical cooperation and special projects

6. The globally important indigenous agricultural heritage systems project is an FAO/United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)-Global Environment Facility (GEF) multi-stakeholder and multi-agency and donor initiative. Its objective is to establish the basis for the global recognition, dynamic conservation and sustainable management of outstanding agricultural heritage systems and landscapes, their biodiversity, knowledge systems and cultural heritage. It is implemented through participatory action programmes in 10 pilot agricultural heritage systems over a period of seven to nine years, with capacity-building of communities; mitigation of threats to the functioning of agricultural systems; enhancement and sharing of systems benefits and the creation of legal and policy environments supportive of the sustainable functioning and viability of the project.

7. A programme on the measurement of tools for sustainable agriculture and rural development practices in the interests of indigenous peoples is a joint project with the International Indian Treaty Council (IITC). It aims to develop a set of "cultural indicators" or tools for measuring the suitability and appropriateness of agriculture and rural development activities and approaches in the best interests of indigenous peoples. The implementation of the programme involves, among others:

- Carrying out a stakeholder consultation on the concerning topic.
- Developing a set of cultural indicators or tools as described above.

8. A methodology and procedures for documenting traditional food systems of indigenous peoples has been developed in collaboration with the Centre for Indigenous Peoples' Nutrition and Environment of McGill University, Canada. Other activities supported and/or implemented by the Economic and Social Department include:

- A methodological guide for vulnerable livelihoods profiling, incorporating issues indigenous populations.
- Special vulnerable groups profiles in mountain areas of Viet Nam and Guatemala, largely inhabited by indigenous groups. Similar profiles on Nepal and Ethiopia are being prepared.
- Development and promotion of a simple methodology for enhancing the relevance of nutrition and household food security programmes to the issues of concern to indigenous people through a participatory appraisal and planning process at the community and district levels.
- The programme strategy is centred on enhancing the involvement of indigenous peoples in decentralized planning and decision-making, strengthening their resource base and social networks for greater self-reliance and determination. The programme's food security strategy emphasizes the role of indigenous crops and foods for the improvement of nutrition among poor and marginal groups.

9. The gender, biodiversity and local knowledge systems to strengthen agriculture and rural development in southern Africa (LinKS) project does not specifically target indigenous people but focuses on local and indigenous knowledge systems and its important role for sustainable agro-biodiversity management and food security. LinKS is a regional project being implemented in the United Republic of Tanzania, Mozambique and Swaziland. The LinKS project works to improve rural people's food security and promote the sustainable management of agro-biodiversity by strengthening the capacity of institutions to use participatory approaches that recognize men and women farmer's knowledge in their programme and policies. The LinKS project has three main activity areas:

- Training and capacity-building of field-level staff about the value of local and indigenous knowledge systems and how to use gender analysis and participatory methods for both research and action processes.
- Research on gender-based differences in farmers' knowledge and management of animal and plant genetic resources for farming.
- Communication and advocacy to enhance sharing and exchange of information about the value of local and indigenous knowledge for sustainable agro-biodiversity management and food security.

B. Participation of indigenous peoples in FAO meetings

10. Indigenous peoples' organizations participate in:

- The preparations and undertaking of the five-year review of the World Food Summit through its International Non-Governmental Organization/Civil Society Organization Planning Committee.
- The work of the Commission on Sustainable Development on the implementation of Agenda 21 through participation in multi-stakeholder dialogues on sustainable agriculture and rural development. Indigenous peoples have been present at formal multi-stakeholder dialogues on that topic through the Commission and World Summit on Sustainable Development processes. They also participate regularly in meetings, telephone conferences and electronic discussions on sustainable agriculture and rural development and have been involved in the evolution of a civil society-led initiative on that topic.
- Indigenous peoples international networks participate as observers in relevant sessions of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. The Commission invites as observers to all its meetings international non-governmental organizations that develop work in the arena of the conservation and sustainable utilization of genetic resources, many of which are indigenous communities groups or work in close interaction with them.

11. Indigenous peoples' input into the sustainable agriculture and rural development dialogue process is facilitated by the International Indian Treaty Council, one of approximately 40 indigenous peoples organizations and networks in the indigenous peoples major group caucus of the Commission on Sustainable Development. IITC facilitated the direct participation of indigenous peoples from the South, Central and North America, Asia and Africa in the multi-stakeholder dialogues at the eighth session of the Commission. The sustainable agriculture and rural development initiative has also been working with the Tebtebba Foundation, an indigenous peoples' international centre for policy research and education, on a less frequent basis. Tebtebba has been taking the lead on developing terms of engagement for the initiative that will provide a framework for the joint work of the diverse stakeholders involved in the initiative.

12. One way in which indigenous peoples movements and/or representatives are raising their issues and priorities and increasing interaction with FAO is through the mechanism of the International Non-Governmental Organizations/Civil Society Organization Planning Committee for the five-year review of the World Food Summit. The Committee is a facilitating mechanism for interface between NGOs/civil society organizations/social movements and FAO on the range of issues that emerged from the NGO/civil society organization forum held in parallel to the Summit and its five-year review. The Committee is based on the principles of self-organization and total autonomy of civil society. It is a network of some of the major NGO/civil society organization global, regional, thematic and constituency networks, such as farmers, indigenous peoples, artisanal fisherfolk and agricultural workers, with which FAO cooperates on an ongoing basis. A focal point for indigenous peoples' organizations is a member of the Committee and each region is expected to include an indigenous peoples' network among the regional focal points.

13. On a more informal basis, FAO has contacts with many indigenous organizations and individuals in the context of, among others, its work on land tenure, the globally important indigenous agricultural heritage systems project and the work of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. Recently, contacts have been strengthened with the Rigoberta Menchu Tum Foundation.

C. Information

1. Focal points network on indigenous issues

14. FAO has established a focal point network to deal with indigenous issues. The Director-General nominated a focal point for indigenous issues in 2001 in response to the request of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The network involves one focal point member designated by each FAO technical department and one focal point designated by each FAO regional office. The network serves as an internal forum for information exchange and support of indigenous issues in FAO activities. It is the focal point for inter-agency collaboration and information exchange.

2. Land tenure

15. Articles on ancestral domains claims and land rights are some of the issues on indigenous peoples that the *Land Reform, Land Settlement and Cooperatives Bulletin* includes in its twice-yearly publication.

III. Relation of FAO activities to issues and recommendations emphasized at the first session of the Forum requiring action from United Nations entities

16. As explained in sections I and II above, FAO is addressing many of the issues raised at the first session of the Forum within its general activities aimed at improving living conditions, food security and access to natural resources of the poor and vulnerable groups, including indigenous peoples.

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Information received from the United Nations system

United Nations Development Programme**

Background and context

1. The lessons learned from country and regional engagement, together with global consultations with indigenous peoples' organizations, fed into and informed the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) policy document entitled "UNDP and indigenous peoples: a policy of engagement". Underpinned by the international human rights framework, the policy recognizes indigenous peoples' rights and their vital role and contribution to development.

2. Rooted in the goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, the objective of the policy is to provide UNDP staff with a framework to guide their work in building sustainable partnerships with indigenous peoples. It underlines the main principles guiding that relationship. Those partnerships are aimed at fostering an enabling environment that promotes indigenous peoples' participation in all decision-making levels; ensures the coexistence of their economic, cultural, and sociopolitical systems with others; and develops the capacity of Governments to build more inclusive policies and programmes. The policy establishes priority areas of engagement, ranging from poverty to issues related to ownership and use of land and natural resources; protection of cultural and intellectual property; and participation in political processes. Moreover, it endorses the principle of free prior informed consent in development programmes, and recognizes indigenous peoples' right to development. The policy provides practical mechanisms for operational and policy engagement at the global, regional and country levels.

3. The rationale for UNDP engagement with indigenous peoples and their organizations is grounded in the UNDP mandated areas of work; processes and agreements of development cooperation; and the aspirations of indigenous peoples.

* E/C.19/2003/1.
** The present document was submitted late to ensure the inclusion of the most recent information.

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The UNDP coordinating role at the country level, its human development paradigm, advocacy of democratic governance and policy of mainstreaming human rights positions makes it a key partner for pursuing a more holistic approach to development. Moreover, the UNDP country and regional presence and the relationship of trust it has with Governments and civil society partners enables UNDP to play a unique role in bringing together different stakeholders in development processes. That mandate can serve as a critical entry point and foundation for supporting more inclusive development policies and programmes; brokering dialogues with all actors; facilitating participatory approaches; and creating the political space for alternative views to be shared.

Policy implementation

Programmes

4. In efforts to implement the UNDP policy of engagement with indigenous peoples, a regional programme in Asia has been developed. Participating countries include Cambodia, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam. Its focus is on strengthening the policy dialogue on indigenous peoples' rights and development in the region. Three general areas of concern are to be tackled: (a) issues with respect to ownership and use of land and their natural resources, including related issues of environmental management; (b) cultural autonomy, including issues of language, education, and the protection of cultural and intellectual property; and (c) participation in formal decision-making processes of the state, particularly with respect to development, which also involves issues of citizenship. The programme will be led from the Philippines.

5. Another important step towards implementing the policy is the indigenous peoples' component within the human rights strengthening programme, a joint initiative between UNDP and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Three pilot projects focusing on building the capacity of indigenous peoples and their organizations at the country level will be designed in 2003.

6. The above-mentioned new initiatives, combined with national development programme activities and small grants programmes, are designed to address the needs of local communities and provide a range of channels for UNDP support to indigenous peoples.

Environment and development

Equator initiative

7. Another important recent development is the Equator Initiative Awards, which recognized 27 community groups that exemplify extraordinary achievement in reducing poverty through the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the Equatorial belt. Many of those awarded were indigenous communities from Kenya to India to Fiji. Building upon those local community initiatives, the Equator initiative, a UNDP partnership programme, is working to create a global movement to reduce poverty along with the conservation, sustainable use and equitable sharing of benefits from biodiversity.

8. That will be accomplished through a three-part programme, consisting of the prestigious award to recognize local achievements, learning exchange grants to foster South-South capacity-building, and the generation and sharing of knowledge to influence policy.

9. Since the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the Initiative has been working to capture the lessons from those community sustainable development models and disseminate them widely to help ensure that they contribute to policy development in the areas of poverty reduction, environmental management and biodiversity conservation. Workshops with awardees are being organized in 2003 to encourage learning exchanges.

World Summit on Sustainable Development

10. Despite the enormous contributions that civil society organizations have made to advancing the world's understanding of sustainable development, communities are generally the least well positioned to have a voice in international summits. In Johannesburg, their voices were heard in key policy forums. A central message to emerge from the Summit was that communities play a vital role in sustainable development.

11. At the community kraal in Ubuntu Village, for example, community leaders interacted with policy makers from Governments and development agencies and with civil society organizations and the media. The kraal, a community space set up by UNDP and hosted by some 100 community representatives from developing countries, was designed and managed to facilitate such interaction and sharing of lessons and knowledge among local communities.

12. One learning event at the kraal was a grass-roots academy on the Millennium Development Goals. Emphasizing that communities must be seen as actors rather than merely recipients, participants noted that community-based organizations were keen to enter into proactive partnerships with national Governments. The measurement of progress on the Goals has the potential of generating national dialogues and improving relations with national Governments.

13. Indigenous peoples emphasized that when implementing the Goals, indigenous peoples' visions of development — and their knowledge and sustainable practices that have been key to safeguarding the environment for centuries — should be taken into account.

Partnership with Denmark and Greenland home rule

14. UNDP was invited to be a key partner in a partnership launched at the Summit by the Government of Denmark and Greenland home rule on indigenous rights and sustainable development.

15. The partnership is aimed at enhancing the capacity of indigenous peoples to influence policy processes and decision-making in sustainable development. In addition, it is to promote knowledge-sharing between donor agencies and indigenous peoples.

Millennium Development Goals

16. Of utmost relevance and importance today is a framework that will be guiding our work and improving our cooperation: the Millennium Development Goals. The Goals, which range from eradicating extreme poverty and hunger to reducing child mortality to building a global partnership for development, were agreed upon at the Millennium Summit by over 150 world leaders.

17. The Goals are a vital framework for concerted and concrete actions in areas where the world needs them most. They signal recognition by all Governments that they confront an agenda of problems that can no longer be managed by and within countries alone. Although those are age-old challenges, what is unprecedented is the commitment of heads of state and government to a set of numerical and time-bound targets that address those key elements of human development. The Goals are to provide coherence and be integral to other processes. Their intention is to define priority areas of intervention.

18. Key to achieving them is development advice, advocacy, grant support to developing countries and improving strategic partnerships. UNDP sees indigenous peoples and their organizations as one of those partners. UNDP recognizes that ensuring the engagement of indigenous peoples and their organizations is critical in preventing and resolving conflict, enhancing democratic governance, reducing poverty and sustainably managing the environment.

19. In efforts to raise awareness of the Goals among indigenous peoples, stimulate debate around the issues and encourage indigenous peoples' participation in the campaign, UNDP held a round table at the Summit on indigenous peoples' perspectives on the Goals, which was co-sponsored with the Tebtebba Foundation of the Philippines.

20. A number of key concerns emerged. With regards to the implementation of the Goals, both the panellists and the audience questioned the kind of development paradigms that underpin the Goals, as well as the kinds of indicators that will be used to measure success or failure. Discussion also focused on some of the major obstacles to achieving the Goals, namely conflict; discrimination, lack of disaggregated data and land titles; and most importantly, the lack of recognition of indigenous peoples' rights. UNDP reaffirmed its commitment to work with indigenous peoples, in particular on initiatives in Asia and the Pacific. Among the proposed activities is to prepare an Asian regional human development report on indigenous peoples in the next few years.

Prior informed consent

21. In the inaugural session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, UNDP hosted a panel on the theme "Indigenous peoples and development: the importance of prior informed consent". The panel provided an opportunity to discuss the importance of free, prior informed consent to development programmes and plans involving indigenous peoples. Discussion focused on the impact that such an endorsement has at both the policy and grass-roots levels, as well as its correlation with the right to development. It reviewed how indigenous peoples' campaigns have led to the endorsement of the principle in international standards (including the UNDP policy document entitled "UNDP and indigenous peoples: a policy of

engagement") and national legislation, as well as the continuing struggles for its adoption in other international and national legislation and policies.

22. Since the issue generated much interest, at the 2002 meeting of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations UNDP again hosted a panel on free prior informed consent. UNDP is currently considering commissioning a study on prior informed consent vis-à-vis development.

Publication: indigenous peoples' case studies

Sharing best practices

23. UNDP commissioned a set of case studies aimed at reviewing the role of indigenous peoples and their organizations in preventing and resolving conflict. A publication is forthcoming.